

Appl. No. : **09/879,981**
Amdt. dated : June 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated March 30, 2004

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 15 through 21 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Please amend claims 2 through 14 and 22 as follows:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a user-specific response, the method comprising:

receiving an inquiry from a user;

associating the user with a search profile designated by a subscriber on a network;

conducting a search delimited by the search profile in a database on the network;

providing a search result to the user;

reporting the search result to the subscriber;

receiving a request for additional information from the user;

initiating a contact between the user and an expert in response to the request for additional information; and

receiving the expert's response and forwarding the response to the user.

[[2.]22.] (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the inquiry is in a natural-language form.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the receiving an inquiry from a user further comprises indexing the inquiry according to pre-defined search terms.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the inquiry is made by selecting at least one topic from a plurality of pre-defined topics.

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5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2 wherein the search profile is pre-defined by the subscriber.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the conducting a search further comprises accessing at least more than one database.

7. (Previously Presented) A network for providing responses to an inquiry from a user affiliated with a network subscriber, the network comprising:

 a database containing information of interest to the user and a processor coupled to the database, the processor programmed with a software to:

 receive an inquiry from the user;
 associate the user with a service profile to determine the scope of the search;
 search for at least one response to the user's inquiry in the database;
 provide the at least one response to the user; and
 forward the inquiry to a consultant in response to a request for further information by the user.

8. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein the processor is further programmed with a software to report the inquiry and the at least one response to the network subscriber.

9. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein the processor is further programmed with a software to search at least one other database for a response to the user's inquiry.

10. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein in the processor is further programmed with a software to report the inquiry and the at least one response to the network subscriber.

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11. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein the processor is further programmed with a software to forward the consultant's response to the user.

12. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein the processor is further programmed to update a database to include the consultant's response.

13. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein the network updates the database.

14. (Previously Presented) The network of claim 7 wherein the network subscriber designates the consultant.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

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Please add the following new claims:

23. (New) A method for providing a user-specific response over an internet network, the method comprising:

receiving an inquiry from a user via said network;
receiving a search profile designated by a subscriber via said network;
associating the user with said subscriber designated search profile;
providing a database for searching by the user;
conducting a search limited by the subscriber designated search profile in said database on said network;
providing a search result to the user;
reporting the search result to the subscriber;
receiving a request for additional information from the user to narrow the search;
initiating a contact between the user and an expert via said network in response to the request for additional information;
receiving a response via the network from the expert and forwarding the response to the user; and
updating said database based on the inquiry from the user.

24. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the inquiry is in a natural-language form.

25. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the receiving an inquiry from a user further comprises indexing the inquiry according to pre-defined search terms.

26. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the inquiry is made by selecting at least one topic from a plurality of pre-defined topics.

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27. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the search profile is pre-defined by the subscriber.

28. (New) The method of claim 23 wherein the conducting a search further comprises accessing more than one database.